Name: Tony Dagradi
College/Department: Music

Rank: Professor

Title of Project: Oneness
(A recording of original compositions based on spiritual themes, and realized by combining sequenced, virtual instruments with acoustic woodwinds, strings and drums.)

Year of Project: 2015

Project Summary (100 words):
For Oneness, I will assemble eleven original compositions which reflect my long held interest in spirituality and mysticism to produce a completed CD length recording using sequenced, virtual instruments combined with acoustic saxophones, flutes, clarinets, bass, drums and percussion. The sequencing of virtual instruments and recording of all woodwinds will be completed in my home studio. Drums, bass and percussion will be recorded at a commercial studio and then added to the existing tracks. The final mix will be digitally distributed by CD Baby and will be made available on download and streaming sites worldwide.

Stipend ($500) Budget Justification:
To bring this project to completion, funds from the Fellowship will be utilized to the cover fees for auxiliary musicians and studio time. The $500 stipend will cover a part of these costs.

Here is a breakdown of the budget for the recording of additional parts at an outside studio:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Artist fee - 10 drum tracks</td>
<td>$1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artist fee - 10 bass tracks</td>
<td>$1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studio time (recording &amp; editing)</td>
<td>$700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total recording costs</td>
<td>$2700</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Where will the results be published, exhibited or performed?
The resultant completed CD length recording will be released and distributed by CD Baby to retailers, and download and streaming sites worldwide, including, Amazon MP3, iTunes, Spotify, Flapsody, Google Play, Rdio, Deezer, Emusic, Last.fm, Shazam, Simfy, Nokia, Xbox Music, Medianet, Beats Music, Trade Bit, 14/7 Myxer and iHeart Radio.

I also intend to design and produce a physical CD using services provided by Disc Makers, one of the country’s preeminent disc manufacturers. This will be a separate endeavor after the end of the Marquette Fellowship term, and will involve additional time and expense.

What other sources of funding (internal and external) have you identified for this project?
none

List years and amounts of prior Loyola University faculty grants (for the last three years):
none for the last three years
Marquette Fellowship 2005 - $7500

Does your research involve human subjects? ____ Yes  _X_ No. If yes, funding for this project is contingent on receiving IRB approval. If you have IRB approval prior to submitting your proposal, please attach the approval memo to your application. If you do not have IRB approval at the time of your submission, please complete the IRB protocol as soon as possible after your proposal submission.

I have submitted the Employee Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form.   Yes

I have read and understand the University’s reimbursement policy.   Yes
Narrative Description of Project:

The first revelations I had regarding the spiritual power of music were triggered by listening to the music of John Coltrane and Duke Ellington. Both artists produced numerous suites and entire recordings using religious references and themes.

Duke Ellington wrote several Sacred Music Concerts. While in high school, I was fortunate to hear him perform one of these extended suites at Carnegie Hall. Ellington’s most revealing quote: “Every man prays in his own language.”

Many of Coltrane’s later works revealed his interests and studies of various religious traditions: Om, Meditations, A Love Supreme, The Father The Son and the Holy Ghost, Expression, Dear Lord, Love, Compassion, Joy, Song Of Praise. The power and conviction of his music has been a huge and continuing inspiration for my own musical and spiritual journey.

Great composers through time immemorial have always made references to a higher power as a source of inspiration:

“Music is a higher revelation than all wisdom and philosophy. Music is the electrical soil in which the spirit lives, thinks and invents.” – Ludwig Van Beethoven

“The aim and final end of all music should be none other than the glory of God and the refreshment of the soul.” - J.S.Bach

In the Bible we find:

Hallelujah
Praise God in his holy sanctuary;
Give praise in the mighty dome of heaven.
Give praise with blasts upon the horn,
praise him with harp and lyre.
Give praise with the tambourines and dance,
praise him with strings and pipes.
Give praise with crashing cymbals,
praise him with sounding cymbals.
Let everything that has breath
give praise to the LORD!
Hallelujah!
- Psalms, Chapter 150

Finally, as St. Ignatius of Loyola teaches, God is in all things; when we create art, we glorify our Creator by multiplying the gifts we’ve been given, stirring the souls of our fellow human beings and disposing them to experience more of God’s goodness all around them. Let us offer who we are and what we do “ad Majorem Dei Gloriam;” - to the Greater Glory of God.

Throughout my career I have composed pieces that have referenced spiritual themes. Many have already been included on recordings I’ve done as a leader and with my regular working
ensemble, Astral Project. In 1986 I recorded a collection of bhajans (devotional hymns from the Sikh tradition) on a project entitled Sweet Remembrance, released by Gramavision Records. This recording received very positive reviews and remains a personal favorite of all my recorded output.

“Sweet Remembrance is Tony Dagradi’s Love Supreme. Dagradi plays with an assured inner peace that translates into respectful passion…” - Scott Yanow, Cadence

“Tony Dagradi has achieved much of the fire (Coltrane’s) thought to be lost forever.”
- Russ Summers, Option Magazine.

Oneness will be another step along this same path. The term references the fact that while mankind is diverse, we are all children of light; ensouled bodies sharing the same planet. And, even though many religions are practiced, there can be only one Supreme Being. The enlightened souls around whom religions have been based, each shared their revelations of the One, speaking the truth from their own perspective and for the times in which they lived.

The titles of the eleven compositions I have selected for this project include Prayer, Oneness, Heart Of The Matter, Give And Take, Hymn, The Mantra, Shimmer, Heart To Heart, Too Soon, The Big Tees and Waltz For Joan.

Stylistically, the arrangements and ultimate direction of this project will draw heavily upon main stream jazz and fusion sensibilities along with various elements of World Music. Rhythmic patterns from Africa, Asia and South America will be added when needed using appropriate indigenous percussion.

In developing the individual virtual parts for the tracks that will make up Oneness, one of the challenges will be to create believable voices that will mesh with acoustic instruments. For the composer/producer this exercise addresses key areas of scholarly development. Painstakingly refining virtual instrument tracks allows for more deliberate and perfectly balanced compositional layers. And, from a technical point of view, this marriage of virtual and acoustic instruments represents the greatest significance of this project.

I successfully used these same techniques in my most recent recording, Gemini Rising. Initially, saxophone parts were recorded and layered entirely in my home studio, paired with virtual drums and percussion. Later, I substituted live drums to complete the project. Reactions from listeners and critics have been overwhelmingly positive.

“Master saxophonist Dagradi…creates a seamless, full-bodied sound, each song emotional, riveting and joyful.” - Ken Micallef, Downbeat

As a performer/composer it is imperative to continually release documentation of new works and contemporary performances. A recording essentially represents me as an artist and constitutes my research and development in a published form.

The resultant CD length recording will be released and distributed by CD Baby to the most popular retailers, and download and streaming sites worldwide, including, Amazon MP3, iTunes,
Spotify, Rhapsody, Google Play, Rdio, Deezer, Emusic, Last.fm, Shazam, Simfy, Nokia, Xbox Music, Medianet, Beats Music, Trade Bit, 14/7 Myxer and iHeart Radio.

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Since the core compositions to be used have been selected, the first stage of this endeavor will be to sketch in all the virtual instrument parts. I have used Digital Performer for over twenty years as my DAW (Digital Audio Workstation) and have acquired the skills I need to create and manipulate interactive voices through a number of different strategies. I have already formulated some preliminary ideas, but look forward to immersing myself in the many hours of work and reflection this engaging project will require.

Next, I will record myself on tenor and soprano saxes as the lead melodic voice followed by accompanying parts on alto, tenor and baritone saxes, flute, clarinet and bass clarinet. This is also a very demanding process, as I want to capture clean and inspired performances.

After all of the above is in place, I will schedule four or five days at a local studio to record live drums and bass. These parts will add depth and diversity and will complete the work on individual tracks.

Ultimately, virtual tracks, live woodwinds, drums, percussion and bass must be brought together in the final mix. This is an essential and demanding component for the completion of any recording. There are many aspects that make for a “good” mix, with lots of choices to be made. Deciding on reverb and effects, getting levels, and finding the correct placement in the aural soundscape for each instrument are all important considerations. However, since each aspect of the recording will have been completed under my supervision, I will have a clear concept of the direction the mix should take.

There is no question that this is a labor intensive project. But, it is one that I eagerly look forward to. As Duke Ellington once said, “I don’t need time. I need a deadline!”

I have a solid track record for completing projects on time, with successfully actualized projects for the National Endowments for the Arts, Louisiana Division of Arts, Marquette Fellowship (2005), The Contemporary Arts Center, et al.

I am delighted that this project is perfectly aligned with the educational and spiritual goals of Loyola. Like Bach, Beethoven, Ellington and Coltrane, I wholeheartedly agree that music and all art should extoll the “Greater Glory of God.”

One last thought: Once completed, I look forward to presenting a live performance of Oneness in conjunction with our Montage Calendar of Events, sharing the results of this project with the students, faculty and staff of Loyola, and the greater New Orleans Community. I would be happy to utilize funds from my endowment to help in the fulfillment of this production.
Project Timetable

June 1-19
Realization of virtual tracks - This will include keyboards, percussion, guitar and other instruments as needed. Fairly extensive drum and bass parts will also be created, even though they will ultimately be replaced. This will help with the energy and interaction of each cut. I have allotted three weeks for this facet, as it is the most time intensive work.

June 21-July 3
When virtual parts are in place, I will begin to record lead parts on either tenor or soprano saxophones. These will be recorded in my home studio using professional grade microphones and preamps. For me, the rhythm parts function as the setting for each piece with the lead saxophone being the jewel in that setting. In addition to the lead parts, certain tracks will incorporate additional woodwinds as background voices. For one piece, I will add a bass clarinet part which mirrors the main melody an octave down. For several other pieces I will play all the parts for a sax or woodwind section. This will include, soprano, alto, tenor and baritone saxes, flute, clarinet and bass clarinet.

July 6-10
To record bass and drums, I will schedule time at a local recording studio. Musicians will play along with the tracks that I have completed, minus the parts they are replacing. More than likely, two days will be needed for each part. I can’t emphasize enough how much of a difference these live parts will make. This is exactly the strategy which I used successfully on my most recent CD, “Gemini Rising.”

June 1-12
I will transfer the recorded drums and bass to my DAW to begin the process of mixing. My strategy for working with a project of this size is to move each piece forward in turn so that effects, EQ and volume are closely aligned. By working like this, I can establish a consistency that will essentially ‘master’ this recording and efficiently bring it to completion.